

A
SERMON

Preached before the
Queen Dowager,

In her Majesties Chappel

A T
SOMERSET-HOUSE

O N
Quinquagesima Sunday

February the 6th. 1687.

Being also the *Anniversary-day* of His
late Majesty King CHARLES the II. of
Blessed Memory.

By *Thomas Codrington* Preacher in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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Quoniam Dower

in her Majesty's

SOMERSET HOUSE

Quoniam Dower

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Cæcus quidam sedebat secus viam, mendicans; — Et clamavit, dicens; Jesu Fili David miserere mei!

A certain Blind man sat by the way side begging; — And he call'd out saying, Jesus Son of David, have Mercy on Me!

Words taken out of the 18th. Chap. of S. *Luke* 35, and 38; Verse and Read in the Gospel of this present Sunday in *Quinquagesima*.

THis Mornings Gospel (Sacred Majesty) were I Master of my own choice, would lead me readily to a Subject, not unwelcome to Your Royal Ears: Offer'd to Me upon the occasion of the Anniversary Remembrance of a *Doleful*, and yet *Happy* day; *Dole-*

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ful for the Departure of Our late *Sovereign* from this Life : Yet *Happy* for the manner of his Preparation for it. If we look upon his Life, then turn our Thoughts upon the manner of his Death : We shall easily discover, both from the one and the other, how particularly my present Text belong'd to Him : *A certain Blind man beg'd, and he call'd on Jesus to have Mercy on him.* We may fitly parallel the *Blindness* of our Beggar in the *Gospel*, with the *Darkness* which obscur'd for a time His Royal Sight ; and the *Cries* of that same Beggar, with the *Penitential Tears* which Bath'd his Death-Bed ; and those *Fervorous Ejaculations*, which Reach'd so effectually the *Ears* of Christ : That now with Joy before his *Altars*, we Celebrate the *Anniversary* Remembrance of that Miraculous Effect of his Infinite Mercy and Goodness. How gladly should I enlarge my self upon this Theme, and loose my self in the Ocean of a long Discourse ; were I not checked in my forwardness by a Compliance I owe to the Ceremonies of the Church, which admits not of Funeral Rights and Solemnities on days (like this) particularly Devoted to Her Service. I must therefore forcibly let this Subject fall, and take up another (though none so proper) to Entertain Your Royal Presence with. And thus I begin,

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THe connexion of those Sacred and Divinely inspir'd Writings the *Holy Gospels*, (although peradventure it appears not so clearly in the Letter) yet may easily be trac'd by the diligent Observer in the Mystery. This may particularly be remark'd in our present *Gospel*; the former part whereof (though with little appearance of connexion in the Letter) leads us Mysteriously to a knowledge of those Truths, which may be gather'd from the Moral of the Latter; that part, I mean, which I've assum'd for my Text. At the opening of this *Gospel*, our Saviour is said to have call'd aside his twelve Disciples, and to have made to them, a part from the rest, a Pathetick Discourse upon his approaching Passion; but the *Evangelist* who mentioneth this, saith also of those same Disciples, That they understood him not; *Et ipse nihil horum intellexerunt*: And they understood not a word of all this.

Our Holy Mother the *Catholick Church*, following the Conduct of Her Great Master, Reads to us *Christians* her Disciples the same Discourse: To Prepare us against this Holy Time of *Lent* for a Fruitful Communication of his Sufferings. But truly this dismal Lecture of the Passion of Christ is Read to us at a Season, in which the Hearts of some loose Livers are so little prepar'd to receive

the intended Advantages thereby : (This being the Merry time of *Shrovetide*, a Season Dedicated to Sports and Riots ; so to forestall the rugged time of *Penance* with Excesses too too Criminal, and Pastimes at the best but dangerous enough :) Their Hearts, I say, at this loose Season are generally so little prepar'd for a Lesson of Suffering and Mortification ; (as that is of the Passion of *Jesus Christ*) that of too too many bearing the Name of *Christians*, with much more reason may be verifi'd, what was also said of his Disciples : *Ipsi nihil horum intellexerunt* : They did not understand a word of all this ; that is, of all those weighty Maxims of our Religion, which this Mornings Gospel did open to them.

This argues a strange Blindness in the Hearts of Sinners : For the Cure of which, as this mention'd Passage hath led me to the choice of my present Text : So I shall endeavour to draw from it those Instructions which the Moral of it may supply me with, both for a right knowledge of this Spiritual Malady, and of the proper Means to Cure it by. Following therefore the method of my Text, I shall consider in my *First Part*, The Blindness of Sinners, as figur'd to us in the Blindness of that poor Beggar. *Cecus quidam sedebat secus viam mendicans.*

In my Second.

The means which sinners are to use, like that same Beggar, for the Recovery of their Sight. *Et clamavit dicens, Jesu Fili David Miserere mei !*

These are the Considerations I shall insist upon; having first implor'd the Divine assistance to favour us with a Ray of Heavenly Light, to dispose our Understandings for the Reception of these Truths; by the Intercession of the Blessed Mother of God in the Angelical Salutation, *Ave Maria, &c.*

First Part.

CÆcus quidam sedebat secus viam mendicans;
A certain Blind man sat by the way side begging.
 The Blindness, Christians, of this poor Beggar, represents to us (according to the common gloss of Holy Fathers) the Spiritual Blindness occasion'd in the Soul by Mortal Sin. *Ambulabunt ut cæci, quia Domino peccaverunt*; saith the Prophet *Sophonias*, *They shall walk like Blind men, because they have sinned to the Lord*: And the Book of *Wisdom*, *Excæcavit illos Malitia eorum*; *The Malice of Sinners hath made them Blind*. This Spiritual Blindness then is the effect of sin, as it is pro-

^{1. 17.}
^{2. 21.}

properly its Punishment too ; it being the want of a right Understanding on the part of a sinner, to consider thoroughly the deplorable Condition he is in. *Peccavi* (saith the sinner) *& quid mihi accidit triste ?* I have sinned, and what hath happen'd to me amiss ? I Eat, I Drink, I Sleep as I did before ; my Meats are as Relishing to my Pallate ; and my Slumbers on my Downy-Pillow as Undisturb'd. I enjoy a perfect Health, and Solace my self with the satisfactions of a Voluptuous Life. *Quid mihi accidit triste ?* What hath happen'd to me amiss ? What hath happen'd to Thee amiss ? Poor Wretch ! Didst thou but rightly understand the Damages (perhaps irreparable,) which thou suffer'st by Mortal Sin, thou soon wouldst change thy Note ; and Bath thy self in Tears, at the sight of thy Unhappiness, who now art Drown'd in Jollities, because thou seest it not !

This Blindness therefore being the effect of Sin: the chief causes of it are as many, as there are in number Capital Vices ; which, like Fruitful Mothers, give a Birth and Beginning to all the rest. Let us then run over in our Thoughts the different Natures and Properties of those Radical Sins ; we shall easily discover, in Discoursing on their Effects, how every single Species of that number brings with it its respective Blindness to the Soul. First, Then of *Pride* this Truth is manifest ; that
Sin

Sin consisting properly in an Inordinate Desire of some Excellency deserving the Honour and Esteem of others : *Appetitus inordinatus excellentiæ, cui debetur Honor & reverentia*, saith S. Thomas. Hence 'tis that the Proud and Haughty Man either arrogates to Himself what he deserves not; or bears Himself Confidently above others, as justly deserving that Tribute of Honour, which he Ambitiously covers to be pay'd to Himself alone. And these are equally the Effects of Blindness; for were not the Eye of his Understanding extremely defective, he would both discover his own unworthiness, and at the same time the real Merits also of his Neighbour.

Covetousness also Blindeth the Possessors of Wealth; according to that of *Moses* in *Deuteronomy*, *Munera excæcant Oculos Judicum; Bribes do hood-wink the Eyes of Judges.* *Gluttony* and *Luxury* have their parts also in the Spiritual Darkness of the Soul. *Drunkenness* (saith *St. Basil*) Is the ^{1sa. 5. 5.} ^{v. 22.} very Origen of all *Impiety*; the occasion of forsaking God; it being an obscuring of the Intellectual Faculty, by the means of which we arrive to the knowledge of him. Blindness also was the punishment of the *Luxurious Sodomites*; a Figure of that Interior Blindness which struck their Souls, *Percusserunt eos. cæcitare.* ^{Gen. 19.} And 'tis observable in the Parable of ^{41.} the Beggar and Dives : An example both of *Gluttony*

tony and Lust, That, *Elevans Oculos suos in tormentis vidit Lazarum* ; Lifting up his Eyes, whilst he was in Torments, he saw poor Lazarus : And then indeed he knew him, whom whilst he liv'd in Pleasures, he saw not ; such is the Darkness the Souls of *Voluptuous Livers* are buried in, *In Tormentis vidit Lazarum*. Anger obscures the Eye of the Intellect, falling down upon it like a Fiery Cloud, and interposing it self between the Sun of Truth and it ; *Super cecidit Ignis, & non viderunt solem*. And how many in their Passion, have fallen foully upon their Dearest Friends ; who, when their Eyes are open'd to the Rayes of Reason, are ready to Expiate. so horrid an Ingratitude, with the very Sacrifice of their own Blood ! Envy also Blinds our Sight, that we cannot distinguish rightly the True Object of our Sadness, whilst we are dejected at another's Good, *Invidia* (saith the mention'd *S. Thomas*) *est tristitia de alterius bono*. But Sloth above all the rest of her Vicious Company, declares her self the most Malitious in inflicting this Wretched Punishment on the Souls of sinners. For whence proceeds this Coldness in the Spirit of *Christianity* ? Whence this Drowsiness in the Service of God Almighty ? This neglect in complying with the Obligations of our Religion ? But from a *Slothful* Ignorance, and unacquaintance with them. We understand not the

the Tyes of our *Christian Duty* ; but the fault is fix'd at our doors, that we put not our selves in the occasions of being acquainted with them. We are destitute of those comfortable Lights that quicken Devotion , because we are easily tyr'd with the practice of it ; we receive not the Promis'd Helps of Grace in our Temptations, because we endure not long and perseverant Prayer : That properly may be verif'd the saying of *S. Peter*, in regard of such ; *Cæci sunt, & manu tentantes* : They are Blind 2 Pet. 1. indeed, like those who search about them with⁹. their Hands ; As Conscious to themselves, sufficiently of their own Unhappiness, though ignorant of the true occasion why they suffer it.

These are the different Causes of the Blindness of a Soul in sin. Now if we will consider this *Intellectual Defect* in its own Nature, we shall find it distinguish'd into two kinds ; into the Blindness of such as see not with their *Eyes shut* (and that's no wonder,) and the Blindness of such, as see not with their *Eyes open* (which certainly is the strangest Blindness of all.) *Apertis Oculis nihil videbat*, saith the Scripture of the *Persecutor Saul*, when he was struck from Heaven with a suddain privation of Sight.

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and in this he was the Figure of those poor Wretches, who have indeed their *Eyes Open*, but
 Act. 9. 8. see nothing ; *Apertis oculis nihil vident*. Now if you ask me, who those Blind Men are with their *Eyes Open* ; with Sorrow I must answer you, They are *Christians* ; The *Gentile*, *Jew*, or what other *Misbeliever* there is , are all *Blind*, *Having* (saith the *Apostle*) their Intellect Obscur'd and Seal'd up in Darknes of Infidelity. They are Blind indeed, and Blindly follow the Passions of this World ; because the Eye of their Understanding is not open'd by the Light of *Faith* to behold the Advantages Promis'd to us *Christians* in the World to come. This is the Misery of poor *Infidels* and *Mis-believers*, whom the Gospel hath not illuminated with the Rayes of Truth. And these are properly those blind Men, who see not indeed, because their *Eyes* are *Shut*. But we *Christians*, who have the Eye of our Understanding clear and open by the Light of *Faith* ; we, who are assur'd that there is a God, a Heaven, a Hell, Eternity, a Punishment for Sin in the next Life, and a Reward for Virtue : We, I say, whose Eye-sight *Faith* hath clear'd to behold all this ; and yet to live, as if we saw it not ! As if these Truths were so many Raveries of a man in a Dream !

Dream! What a dismal Blindness is this with the Eyes Open! To believe like *Christiane*, and yet to live like *Pagans*! *Christiane credere, Gentiliter viventes*! Saith *Petrus Damianus* upon the like occasion.

That the *Pagan* gives up the Bridle to Concupiscence, his excuse is tollerable; because he knows no better: But intollerable in a *Christian*, who hath Learn'd the Lesson of the *Apostle*: That *Livers according to the Flesh shall die*: *Si secundum carnem vixeritis, moriemini*. That the *Jew* hath Crucify'd his own Redeemer, this he hath to say, that he knew him not; But what can the sinful *Christian* reply, who firmly believing in him as truly such, yet Crucify him again by every Mortal sin: *Rursum Crucifigentes sibi ipse ipsas Filiam Dei, & ostentum habentes*, saith *St. Paul* of sinners; Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and exposing him to shame and scorn! That the *Misbeliever* neglects the means our Saviour hath left us in his Church for our Salvation, it is, because he understands not the value of them; but how unpardonable is it in the *Christian* and *Catholick*; who believing the Sacraments, to derive their Virtue from the Merits and Sufferings of a dying God, yet profanes them so easily by so many im-

Rom. 8.
13.

Heb. 6. 6.

perfect Confessions and unworthy Communi-
ons ! Oh sinful *Christians* ! Your Eyes then
are open'd, but to render you more Admir'd,
and less Compassionated for your Blindness.
Your Eyes are open'd by Faith to behold the
horror of a gaping Hell for sinners : And yet
you behold not the eminent danger you your-
selves are in, in following them. Your Eyes
are open'd to discover the dreadful Conse-
quences of Mortal Sin : And yet you discover
not the desperate risk you every moment expose
your selves unto, continuing in it. Your Eyes
are open'd to consider Speculatively, that the
Life of a *Christian* is a Life of *Penance* : And
yet practically you consider not how little your
easie and voluptuous way of living accords
with it. Are not We then, properly, We, (Sin-
ful *Christians*) those Unhappy ones, in whom
is discover'd that extravagant sort of Blindness :
*That their Eyes indeed are open, but they see no-
thing ; Apertis oculis nihil vident ?*

But as those Wretches are miserable indeed,
whose Eyes are either quite Sealed up, through
the want of *Faith* : (such are *Infidels* and *Mis-
believers* ;) or open'd by *Faith*, but to see no-
thing : (such are *Believing Christians*, yet insen-
sible of their Misery ;) so again thrice Happy
and

and Fortunate are those sinners, whose Eyes indeed are open'd, to see: (Such are Mercifully Illuminated with the Rayes of Divine Grace, to look in time with an Eye of True Repentance into the sorrowful condition of their sinful Lives.) The passage in *Genesis* of *Adam's* prevarication (take it according to the Mystery) seems to acquaint us with this Truth. For properly may be said of every Repenting Sinner, what *Moses* said of our first Parents upon their Fall: *Aperti sunt Oculi amborum*; *The Eyes of* Gen. 3 7 *both were open'd, and something then they saw.* (Oh how better was their condition than of those Blind Wretches who see nothing.) But let us enquire into the same Text, what it was poor *Eve* and *Adam* then discover'd, when their Eyes were open'd; *They discover'd that they were Naked*, *Cognoverunt se esse nudos*.

This *Nakedness* of our first Parents, represents to us the *Nakedness* of a Soul despoil'd of Grace. And such is the Misfortune of every Sinner, who travelling, like the *Pilgrim* from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, through the troubled and dangerous ways of Sin, falls into the Hands of *Theeves*, the Devils, who rife him of this Sacred Ornament of his Soul.

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This dangerous way was that poor David walk'd in, when he fell into his sin; and the Barbarous usage of the Thieves Infesting it, (I mean the Devils,) is passionately express'd by him, who had experienc'd the sad effects of their fury and rage. *Ad nihilum redactus sum* (cry'd poor David, when he was rob'd of Grace) *Ad nihilum redactus sum*; O my God! I am brought to nothing! I am Plunder'd! I am Bankrupt, I am Rob'd of Grace, the precious covering of my Soul, and nothing now remains to me but my own Nakedness: Where is now the sweet Harmony of my Soul: The ready Obedience of my Inferior Powers to their Superior; Of my Passions to the Rule of Reason? Now nothing but Disorder and Rebellion reigns within me. Where's the Collection of all my good Works, my Meritorious Actions? All become the spoils of sin! All lost! In the state I am at present, lost! Oh my Treasure of Grace! Oh my Inheritance to Glory! *Ad nihilum redactus sum*: I am rifl'd, I am ruin'd, I am reduc'd to nothing. *Et nescivi*; and that which prov'd the most fatal loss of all, I lost the very Sense of my Misfortunes; *Ad nihilum redactus sum, & nescivi*. Thus complain'd David then a sinner, when his Eyes were open'd to behold his Misery.

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This same road also did *Adam* take before him, and lighted into the Hands of the same Robbers upon the way, the Devils, as he Descended from Jerusalem to Jericho; from the state of Innocence to the state of Sin. And after him all we sinners march on blindly in the same track, and light into the same Disasters upon the way. For (as *S. Austin* makes the Reflection) *Omnes nos Adam sumus*; We are all Figur'd in this *Adam*; We are all *Adams* too. Aug. in Ps. 125. We ought then to turn our Thoughts upon our selves, and consider that it is not only his Misfortune which deserves our Tears, but much more our own; so that our First *Adam* may properly speak to us in the Phrase of our Second, *Jesus Christ*: *Nolite flere super me, sed super* Luk 23. *quosmet ipsos flete*; Shad not, my Children, your 28. Tears on me; but on your selves. And certainly, *Christians*, there is just reason so to do, if we consider seriously how *Adam's* Misery accords with ours; not only in what we suffer by Original sin: But also in what we suffer by our Actual; those sins which after Baptism we our selves commit; for in these as well as that, *Omnes nos Adam sumus*; We are all *Adams* too; That is, we all like *Adam*, are ridd of our Robe of Grace and Justice; although we are not.

not all, like *Adam*, Fortunate in Discovering our own Nakedness; *Cognoverunt se esse nudos*.

This Happy Discovery of our own Nakedness being the first Disposition to a True Conversion: We ought (as we are sinners) to make it our first request to God Almighty in the words of our Beggar in the Gospel, *Domine, ut videam*; Lord that I may see. Our Saviour ask'd him what he desir'd of him; He humbly answer'd, it was, *To see, Domine, ut videam*. Let us then, Dear Sinners, with this good Beggar, demand of God the recovery of our Sight; that so we may arrive to a right understanding of our Nakedness and Misery; *Domine, ut videam*! Lord, that I may see, how poor and naked a Wretch I am without thy Grace, and what a Treasure I have lost, in loosing Thee! Cure then my Heart of its Insensibility, and suffer me no longer to remain Cold and Indifferent, sinning on unconcernedly without the least remorse of Conscience, or without the least reflexive Thought of what I have done: *Quid feci? Domine, ut videam*! Lord, that I may see; How Bountiful thou hast been to me in the Offers of thy Grace: And how ungrateful I have been in neglecting or abusing them! How often thou hast call'd upon me,
and

and I have answer'd not ! How easily I follow the Maxims of the World, rather than those of thy School : The base Sentiments of Flesh and Blood, rather than the Lessons of thy Gospel ! *Domine, ut videam !* Lord, that I may see the manifold malice of my SIN ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Law-giver*, prevaricating against Thy Divine Commands ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Lord*, refusing Obedience to Thy Sovereign Will ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Last End*, neglecting the Beatitude thou hast Courteously Promis'd me ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Creator*, abusing the Bountiful Effects of Thy Creation to Affront the Bestower of them : My Memory, my Understanding, and my Free-will ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Redeemer*, setting no value upon the inestimable worth of Thy Dearest Blood, and bitter Death thou hast endur'd for me ! How much I have despis'd Thee in quality of my *Judge*, expressing my self so little concern'd at the future Terrors of thy Tribunal ! At the Severity of thy final Sentence, and the Dreadful Effects thereof ! How much I have despis'd thee in

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quality of my *Friend*, setting little by thy Grace, by which I correspond with that Title! And finally how much I have despis'd thee in quality of my *Father*, forfeiting my Inheritance to thy Kingdom, and the unparallell'd Dignity of being call'd thy *Son*. All this I did, when I offended Thee; and yet without the least concern for what I had done: *Quid feci?* But now unseal the Eyes of my senseless Heart, and I will publish the wonders of thy Mercy! *Revela oculos meos, & enarrabo mirabilia!*

This Lesson *Christians*, may thoroughly acquaint us, of what Instruction the Passage of our *Beggar* in the Gospel is to us; what a Truth is cleared to us by his *Blindness*, and how his *Wants* may teach us how to Pray. What ought to be the subject of a Sinners Supplications, he hath already shew'd us in what he asked for, *Lord that I may see!* Now, as he hath taught us, what we are to Pray for; So he also teacheth us how we are to Pray. This shall be clear'd to you in my *Second Part*; favour me accordingly with your Attention.

Second Part.

ET clamavit, dicens ; *Jesu Fili Dei miserere mei ! And he call'd out, saying, Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me !* I have represented to you a *Blind Man* Begging for the Recovery of his Sight ; now I shall acquaint you with the Efficacious Means, of which he serv'd himself in his Address, that so his humble Suit might reach our Saviour's Ear, and be Consider'd by him as he pass'd by. *Clamavit, saith the Gospel, He cry'd out ;* He call'd on our Saviour with a loud Voice. Now what's the *Christian* meaning of Calling on God Almighty with a loud Voice ? It is to Accompany our Prayer with our Works ; that so our Actions, as well as Words, may speak the real Sentiments of our Hearts. And our Lives remain not Mute and Dumb, whilst our Tongues do cry for Mercy. *Ne forte finis strepentes vocibus & mali moribus ; saith S. Austin, Sermon 18. de verbis Domini.* Who is then this Beggar (continues the Holy Doctor in the same place ; whose Thoughts I shall follow in the sequel of this Discourse, Who is then this Beggar, that calls on *Christ* with a loud voice, to be Cur'd of his Interiour

Blindness? *Quis est, qui clamat ad Christum, ut pellatur interior cecitas, transeunte Christo, He answereth himself, Clamat ad Christum, qui spernit seculi voluptates; Clamat ad Christum, qui dispergit, & dat pauperibus; Clamat ad Christum, qui dicit non lingua sed vitâ mihi mundus Crucifixus est, & ego mundo.* That Sinner truly calls aloud on Christ, who retaineth no longer an Affection for the World; that Sinner truly calleth aloud on Christ, who Distributeth his Charities to the Poor and Neecessitous; that Sinner finally calleth aloud on Christ, who Witnesseeth not by his bare Discourses only, but by the manner of his Life, *That the World is truly Crucified to Him, and He to the World.*

These difficult ways of Calling on God Almighty, although so earnestly recommended to us by that great Teacher of his Church, yet are but rarely practic'd by Sinners, because they are as rarely understood. Let us therefore examine, how such acceptable Works of *Penance* do speak aloud for the doers of them, and make themselves be understood as far as Heaven. Our first Call then on God Almighty for the recovery of our Sight, is (with *S. Austin*) a rejecting of the sinful satisfactions of this Life. *Clamat ad Christum qui spernit seculi voluptates.*

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This Heroick Action; (and Heroick it is indeed, to gain a victory over Flesh and Blood) this Heroick Action of true Christian Courage speaks strongly in the Favour of a Sinner to Jesus Christ; it pleads his Cause at the feet of Meroy. It is an assurance on the part of the Sinner of the sincerity of his Conversion: How sensible he is of the condition of his Soul: How intighnedly desirous to be Healed of his Infirmary: And how vigorously on his part he contributes to the Cure, by removing those Obstacles that may prevent or hinder it: Those Obstacles are our Passions for the World. How strong a Call then, and how forcible in the Ears of Jesus Christ is a Christian like renouncing of those Worldly Enjoyments, our Passions for which hath prov'd the occasion of our Blindness! *Clamat ad Christum qui spernit seculi voluptates.*

We call (with S. Austin) in another Voice that reacheth also the Ears of Jesus Christ; as often as our Charitable Assistances do reach the Necessities of the Poor: *Clamat ad Christum, qui dispergit & dat pauperibus.* In the Book of Proverbs we read a Threatning Sentence, able to Chill the Hearts of Uncharitable Men; *Qui obturat aurem suam ad clamorem pauperis, & ipse* 21. 13.
cla-

clamabit, & non exaudietur; Who stoppeth his Ears to the cry of the Poor, he also shall cry, and shall not be heard. From whence we may draw this Rational Conclusion, that the opening of our Ears to the Cryes of the Poor, is the opening of the Ears of Christ to us. And such a Call undoubtedly is both loud and piercing; since we employ as many Tongues, as there are Mouths we fill, to speak for us. *Clamat ad Christum, qui dispergit, & dat pauperibus.* A third call also (with *S. Augustin*) is of a Sinner whose Life is truly Crucified to the World, and the World to it. And can there be a Voice more Charming, more Inviting the Mercies of Jesus Christ, than to behold a Sinner suing to him in that same Posture, as He himself did sue for the Worlds Redemption to his Father upon a Cross.

But perhaps (Devout Christians) you are desirous of a clearer Notion of so Celebrated an Expression, and yet peradventure so little understood: (I mean, *A Crucifixion of a Christian to the World, and of the World to him.*) I'll therefore give it to you in an easie and familiar Thought. To be Crucified to the World, and the World to us; is to have our Judgements and Practices directly contrary, the ones to the

the others. In the Judgment and Practice of the World it is a Cross, to live in the World without Enjoying it ; but in the Judgment and practice of a Christian, those very Enjoyments are a Cross, because they hinder us in the way of Virtue. The World sets a value upon his Gifts, his VVealth, his Honours, his Delights ; *S. Paul* on the contrary esteems them as dirt, as they are put in Ballance with Jesus Christ : *Hæc omnia arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.* *Phil. 3. 8.* Oh how truly was the Apostle Crucified to the VVorld, and the VVorld to him ! VVhen two are fasten'd upon the same Cross, they necessarily must turn their backs, the one to th' other. This ought to be the practice of a *Christian*, in his Reciprocal Crucifixion with the VVorld. The VVorld turns his back on you, turn yours also upon the VVorld. The VVorld Laughs at you, because you live up to a practice different from his : Laugh at him also, or rather Pity him, because (through Blindness) he understands no better. The VVorld loves you not, because you are no longer in the number of his Followers : Then love not you the VVorld, and so will little love be lost between you. VVhose Life corresponds with this Lesson of indifferency, may confidently call!

call on Jesus Christ, with a *Mundus mihi crucifixus est, & ego mundo*

Such Christian-like performances are, according to the reflection of the Great *S. Austin*, so many loud and sounding *Voices*, with which our Lives do call on God, and not barely our Mouths only. But as the Vertuous Actions of the Devout Christian sound harsh and gratingly in the Ears of Worldlings : So he is frequently checked by them, and desired to hold his Peace. The same also happen'd to our *Beggar* in the *Gospel*, who was rebuked for his clamour by those who in the company of our Saviour went before him, and by them commanded to be silent. *Et qui praeibant, increpabant eum ut taceret : And those who went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his Peace.* This very particular of our *Gospel*, is also a figure of what too frequently passeth in the Church. Those *Rebuckers* of the Clamorous Beggar, are Lazy and Scandalous Christians, who make it their endeavour to impede the Vertuous purposes of the good : *Bonos Christianos mali & tepidi prohibent.*

No sooner doth the Sinner begin to enter Seriously upon a change of Life, to deny himself those Hurtful Liberties which before he took,

took, to withdraw himself carefully from the occasions of sin: In a word, to live up to the Obligations of his Baptism and Religion; No sooner can a sinner resolve on this, but presently he is oppos'd in his Virtuous Designs: *Qui diligunt seculum, contradicunt*; The Lovers of the World rebuke him for it. They interpret his Conversion an excess of Folly, his new course of Life some Fit of Melancholly or Indigested Zeal, and a singularity tacitly condemning the Lives of so many others, who bear in the World the Name of Christians as well as he. *Et nunquid alii non sunt Christiani?* And are not others Christians too? Such and such persons are not so scrupulous; they think it time enough to take up yet. This Gallant for example continues still his customary Disorders, his Riots, his Debauches, his Excesses in Drinking, Swearing, Gaming, and the like; Yet ask him, what he is, he answers you a Christian, and (though we hardly gather it from his Life) perhaps a *Catholick* too. That Lady still exposes her self to dangerous Liberties, to Scandalous Privacies, which are encouragements to sin; still she sleeps away unconcernedly the better part of her precious hours (every moment of which might gain her

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an Eternity ;) or she Dreams them away, waking upon new Garbs and Fashions : As if for that concern alone she thought her self plac'd in this World ; she is still most lavishly Expensive in her Dress, which makes her as narrow Hearted to the Poor ; and yet she is a Christian, and a Catholick too. In fine, they still conform to the Maxims of the World : They little concern themselves in the Great Affair of their Salvation, and yet they all pretend to a place in Paradise as well as we. But tell us not, (continues the Holy Doctor,) tell us not, how such and such do Live, but how the Gospel teaches them to Live. Let them not invite us by their ill example ; but rather by the Rule of their Religion, the Doctrine and Life of Jesus Christ. *Non dicunt quomodo isti vivunt tam multi, sic vivamus. Quare non potius quomodo dicit Evangelium ?*

But as the maliciously subtle World, resolv'd to nipp our Religious Commencements in the very Bud ; proposes on the one side the Scandalous Examples of Vicious Livers to invite us : So on the other side, it objects the apparent Difficulties which occur to us in the Exercise of Virtue, to deter and fright us. It makes a change of Life appear a thing impracticable.

practicable by Flesh and Blood: The Con-
 quering of our Passions, a Combat to be under-
 taken by more than Man: Mortification the
 Burying of ones self Alive; In fine, it represents
 to us Penance with such a ghastly and fright-
 ful Village, that many Sinners have scarcely
 Courage to look upon it. But this is a Cheat
 the World puts upon us. The face indeed of Pe-
 nance is a little rough, but her Conversation
 is Sweet and Delightful. We may properly
 apply to this Subject the Words of the Learned
 Moralist Seneca, which he himself made use of
 writing to his Friend, *To Arm him with Courage*
against the Fears of Death. Tolle (said he, Ad-
 dressing himself to Death without the shew of
 Fear) *Tolle istam pompam, sub qua lateo & stul-*
tos territas, mors es; quam nuper servus meus Epist. 24
quam ancilla contempsit. Take, take away that
 frightful shew, with which thou appearest to fear-
 fuls; Remove those Sables, cover that Earthly
 Palanquin, dry up those Tears of Relations and
 Friends: Take, take away the appearances of
 Horror that disguise thee. *Mors es*, Thou art
 no more than Death, that Bugbear nothing,
 which lately my very Bond Slave Encountered
 with Scorn; *Mors es; quam nuper servus meus,*
quam ancilla contempsit. The same proportion-

ably may we also say of a Life of Penance ;
Tolle istam pompam sub qua lates : Take, take
 away that mask of Terror which disguises
 thee, to frighten Cowards in Religion ! Silence
 those hard and terrifying Names, of Mortifica-
 tion, Self-denial, Struggling and Combating with
 Flesh and Blood ! Shew thy self to us in thy
 proper Colours ! *Penitentia es* ; Thou art but
 Penance ; A Life, this ignorant Plough-man, that
 tender Girl have passed through with Courage,
 and are Crowned for it, *Et tu non poteris quod*
isti & iste ? And cannot you do like these and
 these ? Know you no better things than that
 vile Peasant ? Own you your self to have a
 lesser Heart than that poor Girl ? And shall these
 snatch from you the Kingdom of Heaven ?
 Take, (Convert !) take this Thought to heart !
 You'll find a Life of Penance no such Monster,
 when such and such have Courage enough to
 tame it ! And their Examples as sharp a Spur
 to Egg you on in the way of Virtue, as those
 can be of Vicious Livers to draw you back !

Aug. lib.
 Conf.

Then let us not be daunted at the Frighful
 Arguments of the World ; but rather set be-
 fore us the example of the Beggar in the Go-
 spels, and take his method for our Rule. The
 multitude indeed rebuk'd him for his Clamour,
 but

but he increas'd it, instead of being Silent at their check : *Increpabant eum ut taceret ; ipse vero multò magis clamabat.* This remarkable circumstance recommends to us most particularly the virtue of Constancy and Perseverance in the practice of good Works , as the surest means of surmounting those Difficulties, which are often objected to us by Flesh and Blood, to deter us from the Accomplishment and Perfection of them : *Perfectio boni operis perseverantia est.* Had the Beggar been daunted at the rebuke of the Multitude, his Prayer had not arriv'd to the Ears of Christ. And if every opposition can make us turn our backs, we may often enter the Lists to Fight, but our Gowardise will not suffer us to be Crown'd.

We must do in our Conversions to God Almighty, as *Abraham* did in his Sacrifice, when the Birds descended to disturb him in it, *Abraham* (as we read in the Book of *Genesis*,) had prepar'd the Flesh of certain Victims clean and neat, to offer them in *Holocaust* to God Almighty : But whilst he was occupy'd in this Religious Care, *Descenderunt Volucres super cadavera* : Certain unclean and hungry Birds of Prey, (drawn thither peradventure by the scent of the Bodies,) came fluttering about him,

him, attempting with their dirty Beaks and
 Talons upon those Sacred Lambs designed by
 him for the *Holocaust*. What did that Holy
 Patriarch in this Distraction? In this distur-
 bance of his Devotions? *Abigebat eas*. He drove
 them unconcernedly away. And as they re-
 turn'd, he drove them away again, pursuing still
 with greater Fervour that *Holy Work*, the greater
 was the Molestation he suffer'd in it. Till at
 last they left him, and undisturbedly he finished
 his Sacrifice. So it is with those Sinners who
 prepare themselves by a change of Life, to offer
 up to God Almighty a Grateful Sacrifice of a
 Contrite Heart. They meet indeed with *Unclean*
Birds, that flutter about them to disturb them
 too; These are the Temptations of their past
 Life, which often return in their Devotions,
 attempting to Pollute the Purity of this new
 Victim with unclean Thoughts; *Luxury* flings
 dirt upon our good Resolutions of living
 Chaste; *Glatony* upon our purposes of quitting
 our Riotous and Debauched Lives; *Sloth* upon
 our Vigilancy in the Service of God, and the
 great concern for the Salvation of our Souls;
 and so for the rest: But drive those *Birds* away.
 (Parley not with your Temptations) and as they
 turn upon you, drive them away again. Doubt
 not

ner, at last they'll leave you, that you may undisturbedly compleat your Sacrifice; that is, may perfect the Work of your Conversion, and the Church with Joy may see the Fruits thereof.

These, *Christians*, are the weighty Reflections that offer themselves to our most Serious Thoughts upon the Moral Examination of this Text. The Corporal Blindness of that Poor Beggar represents to us the Spiritual Blindness of a Soul in Sin. Which Blindness, (if we form a right Conceit of it) is so deplorable in regard of sinful *Christians*, who have their understanding open'd by the Light of Faith; and yet remain insensible of their Misery: that properly with their Eyes open, they see nothing. *Apertis oculis nihil vident.* Those indeed amongst us who are desirous to have their Eye-sight cleared, to discover their own Nakedness; (such a Discovery being a principal Disposition to a true Conversion;) have also a method given them by our Blind Beggar, how to Address themselves to Jesus Christ for the recovery of their Sight: *Domine, ut videam!* Lord, that I may see! He call'd on Christ with a loud voice, *Clamavit*; and so must we; but (in a ready compliance with *S. Austins* Sage Advice,) let not barely our Tongues call on him; but our Lives also.

also. The Beggar heard himself *Rebuked* by the Multitude, and commanded to hold his Peace, *Increpabant eum ut taceret*. The same rough usage must we expect from the Temptations of the World and VVorldly Livers, whose malicious endeavours are to retard our Progress in the way of Virtue. Let us then no more regard them than the Blind man did the Peoples cheek, that so *Our Voice may reach the Ears of Christ*. Vouchsafe us then, dear Son of David, as thou didst the Blind man in the Gospel, a Gracious *Respite*, *Look up, and see* ! Clear our Understandings of those Clouds, which Passion and Ignorance have drawn before them ! Grant us the Exercise of a lively Faith, to discover those Sacred Truths, which are conceal'd from the Eye of the VVorld ! Purify our Souls from Sin, and render them capable of beholding that Invisible *Being*, which is only the Object of a *clean Heart*. That arriving to the right knowledge of Thee in quality of our *last End*, and *chiefest Good*, we may Love Thee, Praise Thee, and Enjoy Thee for Ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S

